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JUNKYARD
8-19-97

Superfund Records Center

SITE: O'ConnorBREAK: 13.3

OTHER: _____

City junkyard contamination is outside site

EPA

By DAVE CHEEVER
Staff Writer

AUGUSTA — Two new areas of contamination have been detected in land outside the former F.W. O'Connor federal Superfund site, and Central Maine Power Co. has received praise from the Environmental Protection Agency for its quick response to the discovery.

Several families who live along Cony Road approached CMP, the site's owner, in June with their concerns that leftover polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) or polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) from the former junkyard had contaminated their backyards.

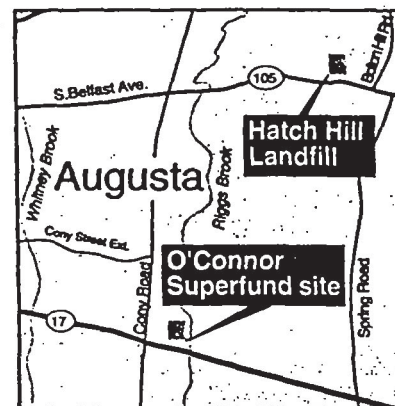
Led by Raymond Rodrigue and Robert Brochu and represented by attorney Wayne Moss, the residents cited tests already conducted by the state's Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory that indicated the presence of PCBs.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in conjunction with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, authorized CMP to re-test the suspected trouble spots, and on Monday, the results of those tests were shared with the property owners.

"There were three target areas," said CMP's Roy Lane, "notably the old go-cart track on the Panek property, and the Brochu and Rodrigue properties where either some of the old transformers were stripped, salvaged and discarded, or where PCB contamination might otherwise have occurred."

Terry Peacock, project coordinator for the O'Connor clean-up, said the investigation detected no PCB pollution on the Panek property, but found two contaminated areas on lands owned by Brochu and Rodrigue.

"The target clean-up goal for PCBs in soil at the off-site properties is 1 ppm," Peacock wrote in a letter to the EPA. "Because PCBs were detected in soil at concentrations above the target clean-up goal in Area 2 on the Brochu property



Staff graphic / SUSAN VARNEY

and in the drainage swale on the Rodrigue property, Phase II investigation and Phase III remediation are proposed for these areas."

In raw numbers, PCBs were detected in seven of 49 soil samples from the Brochu property at concentrations ranging from 0.43 to 36.2 parts-per-million, and at two spots in the drainage swale on the Rodrigue property, where the ppms measured 2.12 to 7.3.

"Those are unacceptable levels and we will be taking expeditious steps to remove the contaminated soils and clean up the area," Lane said.

Lane discussed details of the investigation and proposed solution at a meeting with the affected landowners on Monday.

The contaminated soil on the Brochu property, identified as a debris pile where the family, with O'Connor's approval, had done salvage work on transformers for years, will be removed and replaced.

"The machinery is there, the people are there, the methodology is all approved, and given the size of the affected area, this is a project that can be completed in a couple of days," Lane said.

After the proposed remedy has been completed, the EPA will take an additional sample to assure that the fix worked.

"The property owners are pleased

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at the speed with which CMP approached this situation and that the company has committed to the clean-up," Moss said Monday. "They have suspected for years that their properties have had some PCB contamination and now there is definitive proof."

Ross Gilleland of the EPA's Boston office also credited CMP's approach.

"The EPA appreciates Central Maine Power's thorough commitment and response to addressing the contamination allegedly associated with the O'Connor Superfund Site," Gilleland wrote to Peacock on Aug. 7. "Your quick response

has minimized the transaction costs for all parties involved and will result in greater protection of Augusta residents and environmental health."

The O'Connor junkyard, just off Route 17 and within yards of Cony Road, was a family-run scrap-metal business for nearly a century, and was designated by the EPA as a "Superfund" site in 1983 because the land and groundwater were discovered to have high levels of PCBs, a suspected carcinogen.

CMP used the O'Connor site to discard transformers, capacitors and other electrical equipment, and signed a consent agreement with the government in 1990, accepting responsibility to participate in the clean-up.

The fix approved by the government agencies began last summer at an estimated cost of under \$15 million.

With the findings off-site, the clean up effort has now been expanded beyond the formal junkyard property.

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